# Lights Going Dark

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/50759467.

| | |
|---|---|
| Rating: | General Audiences |
| Archive Warning: | No Archive Warnings Apply |
| Category: | M/M |
| Fandom: | Hannibal (TV) |
| Relationship: | Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter |
| Characters: | Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter |
| Additional Tags: | Hurt Will Graham, Caring Hannibal Lecter, he makes things worse before he makes them better, Someone Help Will Graham, Pretentious Hannibal Lecter, i love how those are tags, Hurt/Comfort, Whumptober, no beta we die like therapeutic boundaries |
| Language: | English |
| Series: | Part 11 of Whump Is My Design |
| Stats: | Published: 2023-10-11 Words: 1,497 Chapters: 1/1 |

# Lights Going Dark

by WordsAblaze

Summary

It wasn’t supposed to become a habit.

It honestly wasn’t, and yet Will repeatedly—with increasing frequency—finds himself escaping stressful situations, overwhelming crime scenes, and even just his own mind when it becomes particularly dark by curling up underneath Hannibal’s bookshelves.

“Hello there, Will,” Hannibal says as soon as he walks through the door, without having even looked up.

Notes

ngl i just haven't gotten over Will running away to Hannibal's office so....

day 11 prompts used: "no-one will find you"

See the end of the work for more notes

It wasn't supposed to become a habit.

It honestly wasn't, and yet Will repeatedly—with increasing frequency—finds himself escaping stressful situations, overwhelming crime scenes, and even just his own mind when it becomes particularly dark by curling up underneath Hannibal's bookshelves.

"Hello there, Will," Hannibal says as soon as he walks through the door, without having even looked up; Will wouldn't put it past him to have categorised each of his scents in order to develop such an uncanny ability. It's either that or the bizarre possibility that he simply calls out a greeting each time he enters his office, just in case. The thought makes him laugh, and Hannibal looks up at that, raising an eyebrow.

"Sorry," Will mutters, shaking his head to dispel the amusement. "You didn't have any appointments for the rest of the day, so…"

"Have you memorised my calendar?" Hannibal asks, to which Will just shrugs, reluctant to admit having done just that. He knows that, if Hannibal were to judge him, it would never be for something so mundane, and yet the doubt—fear—lingers.

Choosing mercy and looking almost pained to do so, Hannibal hums in acknowledgement. "Are you injured?"

Will shakes his head. "Perfectly fine."

"The term 'perfect'," Hannibal says slowly, "once referred to the act of printing a desired ink pattern on both sides of a piece of paper. An interesting implication, that a script could not be complete if the second half of its medium was left blank. Tell me, Will, which information are you withholding from this conversation to prevent yourself from truly being perfect?"

Will sighs. He debates attempting to match Hannibal's metaphor, but quickly disregards the idea, knowing that it would be seen as rude to feign understanding and make himself seem foolish. "The term 'perfect' also refers to the act of working towards completion, does it not?"

"I see," Hannibal says.

*See?*

Inhaling sharply, Will closes his eyes, letting his head thump against the bookshelf he's propped against. Hannibal, thankfully, chooses not to press him further, instead taking a seat at his desk, the steady grating of pencil against paper filling the room.

"Do not feel as though you must rush to perfect your explanation," Hannibal says after a while. "No-one will find you here."

With a small smile, Will opens his eyes again, turning his head to meet Hannibal's gaze through the railing. "Thank you," he whispers gratefully, barely audible. It feels odd, as if the two of them are classmates promising not to reveal having skipped class on purpose, together.

Strangely, it also feels *natural* , as if there was no other option but for Will to seek shelter with Hannibal and for Hannibal to shelter Will in return.

Eventually, when he's cycled through ridding his legs of stinging numbness twice over, Will makes his way down from the balcony, stopping just behind Hannibal to peer over his shoulder. He frowns at the latest sketch, unsure why it feels so familiar and yet unrecognisable to him. "Who is it?"

Hannibal chuckles. "You don't recognise yourself?"

Will blinks. He turns his gaze back to the sketch, scanning it again, and although, yes, the figure on the page vaguely resembles him, they differ *immensely* . The figure is posed languidly, carelessly elegant, its expression soft and relaxed and caught mid-smile. The figure's features are sharp and defined but not cold, not awkward, not the way his own appear when he spares them a glance in fogged mirrors.

"No," he replies simply.

Turning to look up at him, Hannibal clicks his tongue. "A shame, then, for there has truly been no other influence than yourself in my mind for this piece."

"Some perfect version of me," Will mutters, exhaling slowly, "a version that never can and never will exist. I would lower your expectations, Doctor Lecter."

"Perhaps you ought to raise yours instead."

Will scoffs, walking back over to the ladder and perching on one of its lower rungs. "I didn't come here looking for a therapy session."

Hannibal nods. "Of course. Forgive me, the habit is a difficult one to break. I must ask though: what *did* you come here seeking?"

He's asked the question before, here and there, but never quite so directly. Will, conscious that he has more or less just insulted Hannibal's artwork after claiming the other man's office as his sanctuary, figures he owes at least an *attempt* at an answer. "I don't—I didn't arrive with a specific goal. I just needed to, uhm, breathe. Think. Sit down."

"But not alone with your own thoughts?" Hannibal prompts, and Will bites back a groan.

"I am beginning to wonder whether that would have been a less tiresome option," he replies.

To his surprise, Hannibal smiles at him, his eyes crinkling at the corners. He swivels his chair so the two of them are face to face, and scans Will from head to toe in an almost agonisingly slow sweep. "The act of perfecting an inked document was often carried out by a team rather than an individual."

"I told you I was fine," Will replies, clenching his jaw.

"You lied," Hannibal says bluntly, his tone leaving no room for argument. Will tries to pretend that he's not abruptly seized by a wave of guilt that sends a shiver through his spine,

one he has to physically, forcefully suppress even though he's almost certain Hannibal will be able to tell anyway.

Will pointedly meets Hannibal's gaze head on. "I needed not to be alone with *Jack's* thoughts."

Hannibal's eyes narrow ever so slightly. "Another early morning crime scene?"

"Against your better judgement, he knows," Will confirms, curling his arms around himself. "It was… It wasn't the Chesapeake Ripper. I almost wish it had been. He was—he was… unpleasant."

"Unpleasant?" Hannibal echoes, clearly unsatisfied.

His nails digging into the skin of his shoulders, Will nods. "He, uh, wasn't sure who he was. He was trying to… to piece himself together. With jigsaw pieces of his loved ones. I—he explained it to them, and couldn't understand why they didn't love him enough to volunteer themselves. He made—he made them watch as he tore each of them apart. In turn. Prolonging their misery. Because he—they deserved it. They didn't want to help. They didn't love—

"—didn't love me. They wouldn't. Listen to me. They had to be sacrificed. Sacrificed for the greater good. I am the greater good. I loved them. And they—they didn't love me. They shunned me and. Turned me away. I had no choice. I turned them. I turned them into me. I needed to love them. I needed to be loved by them. I had to sacrifice them. Use them. I had to —"

" *Breathe* ."

Will gasps, a half-stifled sob escaping him.

" *Inhale* ."

He breathes in.

" *Exhale* ."

He sobs.

" *Inhale* ."

He breathes in.

" *Exhale* ."

He sobs.

" *Inhale* ."

He breathes in.

“ *Exhale* .”

He breathes out.

“ *Perfect* ,” Hannibal murmurs, brushing away his tears with the pads of his thumbs, at which point Will registers the hands cupped ever so gently around his face.

Inhaling and exhaling instead of thinking, Will takes a moment to reorient himself, noting that the two of them have somehow migrated to the floor, on their knees, with Hannibal all but holding him upright. As soon as the thought passes through his mind, he lets himself slump into Hannibal’s personal space, his head sliding from warm hands to Hannibal’s shoulder.

“I’m not,” Will mumbles into the fabric of Hannibal’s blazer.

Hannibal hums—Will *feels* that more than he hears it—and lifts his arms to wrap around Will, one hand resting on the small of his back and the other settling on the back of his head, holding him close.

“I—”

“Shh,” Hannibal interrupts. “It seems you cannot be trusted with your own mind, Will.”

“I got lost,” Will blurts. “I got lost and I just…”

“Found your way here,” Hannibal concludes, his voice unusually soft. “I apologise for forcing you back into the maze, Will.”

Will laughs bitterly. “Are you?” He’s not even sure he means the accusation, but Hannibal seems convinced that he does, pulling the two of them apart just enough for their eyes to meet and for Will to see what can only be described as insurmountable regret written plainly on Hannibal’s face. “Oh. You really are.”

A pause, then the hint of a smile. “I really am. I misjudged the dangers at the centre of the maze, and, for that, you have my sincere apologies.”

Later, Will has no doubt he will spend a stupid amount of time marvelling at having received a *sincere apology* from the same man whose ego could power an entire city. But, exhausted and just barely cognisant, he lets his head drop onto Hannibal’s shoulder a second time. “Okay,” he breathes, “perfect.”

Hannibal grins above him, yet another gesture that Will really just *feels* occurring, and pulls him close once more. “Aren’t you just?”

End Notes

isn't he just ??

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!